

The Special Operations Warrior Foundation

and the Marine Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry Scholarship

- For nearly 30 years, the Special Operations Warrior Foundation has been caring for the families of fallen and wounded special operations warriors.
- The Special Operations Warrior Foundation applauds the improved educational benefits offered by the VA through its new Post 9/11 GI Bill and the Marine Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry Scholarship, which provides educational benefits to the children of fallen military personnel.
- The Special Operations Warrior Foundation will continue to bridge the gap between the benefits offered and the funding needed to receive a post-secondary education for the children of fallen Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps special operations personnel. Additionally, the SOWF offers the families of wounded and fallen special operators a wide variety of resources, including educational, family and financial aid counseling.
- While the Fry Scholarship benefits are generous, eligibility restrictions may leave many children without funding, notably nearly 400 children whose parents lost their lives prior to Sept. 11, 2001 are not eligible. The SOWF will ensure all children of fallen special operations personnel are provided the opportunity for college education.

What is the Marine Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry Scholarship?

The new Post 9/11 Bill includes a specific benefit to the children of service members who die in the line of duty after Sept, 10, 2001, named after Marine Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry. The benefit offers eligible children the opportunity to received educational benefits up to the highest public, in-state undergraduate tuition, fees, monthly living stipend and book allowance. Eligible students are entitled to 36 months of benefits.

However, the Fry Scholarship does not provide funding for vocational/technical/trade schools, transportation, online programs, computers, or other personal expenses.

How does the Fry Scholarship affect the Foundation's mission?

Despite the new bill's expanded benefits, many children would not qualify under its strict terms. The SOWF and its supporters play an important role by bridging the gap for the children of fallen special operations personnel who will not meet the bill's eligibility requirements or students that are unable to complete their college education in the allotted 36 months.

SOWF will continue to provide funding for vocational/technical/trade schools, transportation, online programs, computers, or other personal expenses.

According to the U.S. Department of Education only 36 percent of students graduate from college within four years. A number of reasons explain the delay, including students who switch majors or schools. In fact, over half of the students switch majors at least once. Other factors for the delay include taking remedial courses and being shut out of popular or required courses.

An additional year could boost the total cost of a college education by 25 percent that would not be provided by the Fry Scholarship.

Additionally, the Foundation works closely with each family of wounded or fallen special operations personnel to assist with their unique needs.

The Foundation's program supporting wounded Special Operations warriors remains unchanged. Whenever a member of Special Operations is hospitalized as the result of a severe injury or wound received in Iraq or Afghanistan, the SOWF sends immediate funds to allow their loved ones so they can travel to be bedside during their recovery. To date, the SOWF has provided more than \$840,000 to the families of wounded troops.

Are all children of fallen Special Operations personnel eligible for college tuition/fees through the bill?

Not all children are eligible. The new bill provides expanded benefits to the children of service members who lost their lives post Sept. 11, 2001. Those children who lost a parent prior to the conflict in Iraq or Afghanistan in an earlier conflict or training accident, do not qualify for the Fry Scholarship.

What gaps would the Foundation fill for the students?

In addition to providing college funding (tuition, books, fees, room, board, expenses) to the children of fallen special operations personnel who are not eligible for the Fry Scholarship, the SOWF provides educational and family counseling to all students in our program.

Because of the Foundation's focused family counseling in recent years, more than 80 percent of the high school students in our program are enrolled in colleges and universities across the country.

The SOWF will also bridge the gap between the benefits offered and the actual cost of completing an undergraduate degree or technical degree.